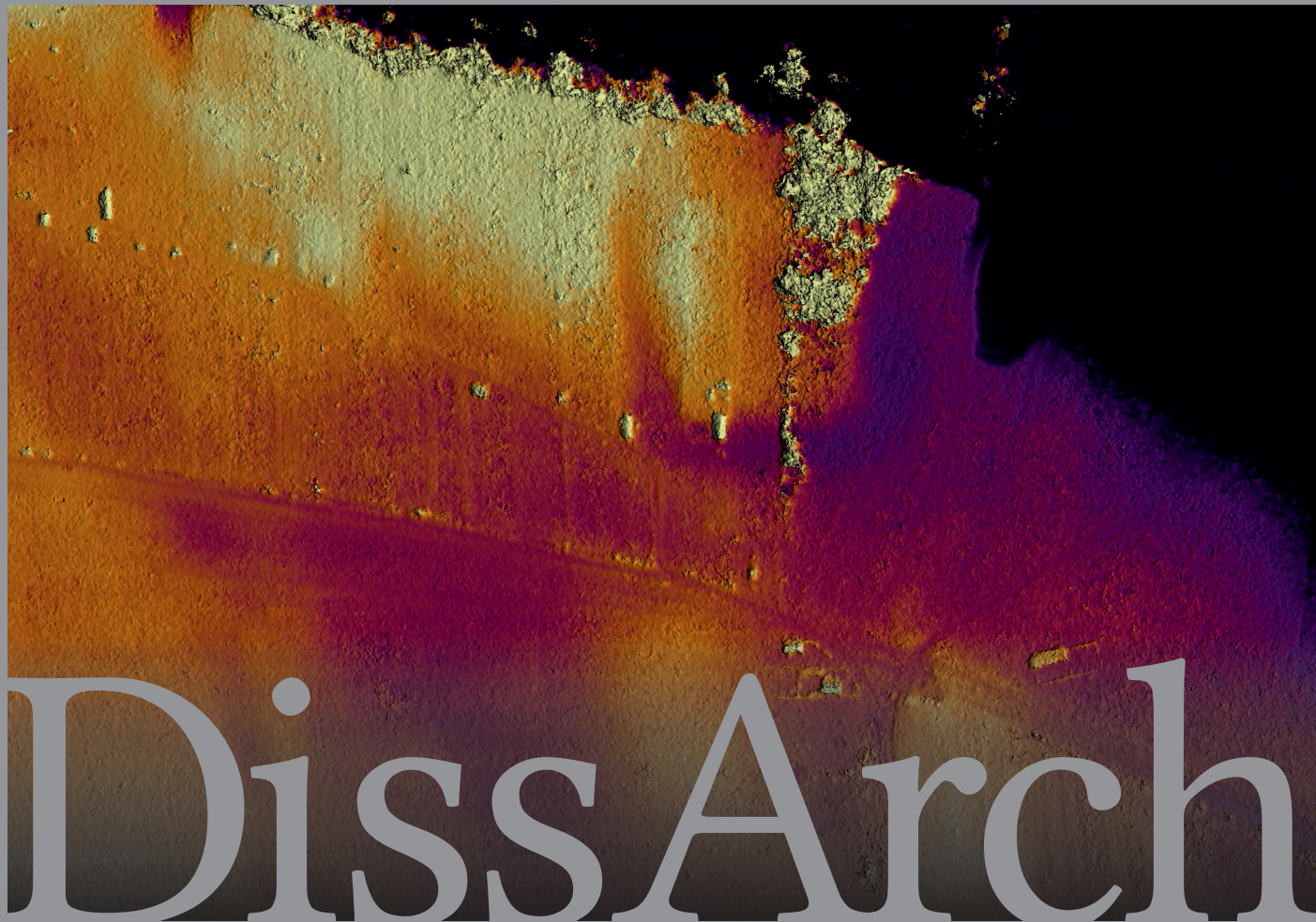


# DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico

Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



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# Same but different

## A new possible scheme on late archaic black-figure vases

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**Abstract:** Attic black-figure vases from the Late Archaic and Early Classical periods are often neglected by scholars. Most of them are not included in the Beazley Archive Pottery Database, significantly hindering related research. This paper presents such a vase from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. The authors propose that the scene on the *lekkythos*, akin to others from the era, is a simplified version of a more elaborate one.

**Keywords:** black-figure vase painting, Haimon Group, iconography, late Archaic Period, late black-figure iconography, *lekkythos*, Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, scheme, weaving scene

### Introduction

The Attic pottery industry in the Late Archaic–Early Classical periods (between ca. 510 and 440 BC) was characterised by a certain duality. While the red-figure technique flourished, the market was flooded with large quantities of low-quality black-figure pottery. These vases were carelessly painted, with coarse and rough incised sketch lines, if any. Almost all specimens feature firing flaws, demonstrating how negligently potters carried out three-stage firing. However, despite their quality, one should not neglect these artefacts as they are frequent finds of recent, well-documented excavations throughout the Mediterranean and beyond and, thus, provide useful stratigraphical data for archaeologists.

In the Beazley Archive (BAPD),<sup>1</sup> 797 vases are attributed to the *Haimon Group*, 401 to the *Diosphos Painter*, and 385 to the *Beldam Painter*, just to name a few who produced these kinds of vessels. Upon looking at the number of vases decorated by ‘quality’ painters, one finds 117 vases attributed to *Exekias* and 211 to the *Amasis Painter*. The tendency in museums to upload only the bigger, higher-quality vases and neglect or postpone the introduction of smaller or mediocre pieces into the database may also account for the big difference in numbers: probably all known vases attributed to *Exekias* or the *Amasis Painter* can be found in BAPD, while it contains only a part of the vessels—or their fragments—decorated by the *Haimon Group* or the *Beldam Painter*. However, positioning this material in the related chronological framework and the connection network of vase painters may contribute significantly to a better understanding of how the pottery market operated in terms of distribution and production.

1 Last accessed on 31 Oktober 2023.

## The *lekythos* from Budapest

The subject of the present study, a black-figure, white-ground *lekythos* (Inv. no. 82.2.A), is such a ‘neglected’ lower-quality mass-produced piece. The *lekythos* has not been published before, nor is it included in BAPD (due to the tendencies mentioned above). The small vessel is incomplete, with its mouth, neck, handle, and foot missing; the height of the fragment is 10.7 cm. The surface of the body flaked off in a rounded rectangular patch of about 3.5 × 3 cm, which, fortunately, did not reach the field of figural decoration that has remained intact even though the vessel is heavily worn: the paint is cracked, and the surface features minor firing defects (Fig. 1).



Fig.1. Photos (1–4) and drawing (5) of the *lekythos* from Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts (Inv. no. 82.2.A; image by Szilvia Johácz)

Originally, the now-missing foot was attached to the strongly narrowing lower end of the slightly tapered, almost cylindrical body with a curve, while the vessel's almost horizontal shoulder joined the upper end of the body in a sharp, profiled line. The upper two-thirds of the body was coated in white slip, providing background for the figural decoration, while the lower third was painted in black. The two parts are separated by a zone comprising parallel horizontal motifs: a wide black band between two thin lines, separated by two reserved lines, which also separate them from the bottom third of the body. Besides, ornamental decoration appears on two parts of the vase: on the shoulder, which is adorned by a row of lotus buds simplified into a plain row of rays, and in another horizontal zone right under the top of the body, which is adorned by three rows of dots separated by horizontal lines—probably an attempt to imitate a chessboard motif.

Half of the upper, white-background part of the body under the ornamental zone is covered by a scene with two seated women and two standing men (Fig. 2). The scene itself seems so motionless that the observer could think the figures were painted next to each other without any meaning, just to fill the space. The two women, each seated on a *diphros okladias* and facing each other, are draped and wear ribbons in their hair. The woman on the left holds a long, stick-like object with both hands while the other raises her hands and perhaps also holds something—even if so, the object is not similar to the one held by the other woman. A man in a *chiton* stands between the women, holding a staff, leaning on his left leg, turning to the right, and stretching his right hand towards the woman on the right. A bald man in a short dress, with his hands on his hip and holding a staff similar to the other man's, stands at the right periphery of the scene.

An important element in identifying the vase painter is that while the figures are static and not very skilfully painted, the incised overdrawing is rather dynamic.<sup>2</sup> Stylised vines run in the background, making the scene even more crowded. Even though it cannot be established beyond doubt that the vase is the work of the *Haimon Painter*, it can clearly be associated with the broader *Haimon Group*.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 2. The figural scene of the *lekythos* for iconographical reconstruction (drawing by Szilvia Johácz)í)

2 HASPELS 1936, 131–132.

3 According to the inventory card, János György Szilágyi reached the same conclusion.

## The iconography of the scheme

Based on the typology by Mark Stansbury O'Donnell, it is easy to identify the men leaning on a staff as spectators representing the everyday Athenian citizen.<sup>4</sup> As the seated women and the men are represented in a single composition where the spectators not only frame a central scene, they should be interpreted as active participants. The female figures do not have any special attributes, suggesting that they represent ordinary Athenian women, an interpretation corroborated by the men seemingly interacting with them. Since the composition does not comprise trees or other indicators of being in the open air, it probably depicts a domestic scene. The oeuvre of the *Haimon Painter* includes *lekythoi* with similar decoration, but those are poorly preserved or too hastily painted to be of help in identifying the scene on the vase in focus.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the 6th century BC, men leaning on a staff were frequently represented in scenes on vases not (just) as spectators but also as active participants. These figures differ from other 'spectator' motifs studied by Stansbury O'Donnell because they often have a role in the scene,<sup>6</sup> frequently appearing around one or more seated female figure(s) on black- and red-figure vases.<sup>7</sup> It was suggested that such compositions, common in the Early Classical Period, should be interpreted as courting scenes<sup>8</sup> and the seated women as *hetairai* because the men usually give them a small gift or a purse.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 3. *Kylix of the Boot Painter (Side B)*. Warsaw, National Museum 142317. BEAZLEY 1963, 821.6; BAPD 210166. The image is the property of the National Museum in Warsaw (photo by Piotr Ligier)

4 STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 2006, 142.

5 For close analogies, see BAPD 682; Gela, Museo Archeologico N220, BAPD 21420; Prague, National Museum: 2184, and BAPD 331205 Brussels, Musées Royaux: A2300; BEAZLEY 1956, 585.5.

6 STANSBURY-O'DONNELL 2006, 161.

7 E.g., BAPD 214772; Havana, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: 155; BEAZLEY 1963, 1116.46, BAPD 305595; Lecce, Museo Provinciale Sigismondo Castromediano: 562; BEAZLEY 1956, 530.78, 534.7; BEAZLEY 1971, 264.266, and BAPD 351650; Basel, market, Münzen und Medaillen A.G.; BEAZLEY 1971, 265.267, BAPD 331641; Sevres, Musée Céramique: 244, ABV 562.545, BAPD 9033489; Berlin, Antikensammlung: F1828, (side B).

8 OAKLEY 2020, 29–30.

9 E.g., BAPD 212214; Rome, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia: 15708; BEAZLEY 1963, 839.35; BEAZLEY 1971, 423, BAPD 211222 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum: 2150; BEAZLEY 1963, 1614, BAPD 340792; Frankfurt, private, Deppert; BEAZLEY 1971, 214.5. (In this last case, the seated figures are youths.)



Because of the quality and condition of the Budapest *lekythos*, one cannot be sure whether any gift-giving happens in the scene; thus, other details of the decoration must be examined to understand what it may depict. The stick-like object in the hand of the woman on the left may be the key to reveal that. One cannot be sure whether she holds an object in both hands or only one, nor whether the other woman has a similar item; however, the object—or rather the two objects—in the hand(s) of the woman on the left are certainly connected by a thin line. This detail was initially confusing, as it has very few known analogies. How should these objects be called? *Krotalon* (κρόταλον) would be an obvious answer, and that the women on the Budapest *lekythos* hold such a castanet-like instrument in each hand in a way frequently appearing in scenes from the period; however, *krotala* are never depicted tied together by a string. Another common object in the hands of seated figures is the lyre,<sup>10</sup> but this possibility has also to be ruled out on the grounds of the object having no strings and its shape not resembling a lyre at all.

Considering that the composition probably depicts a household scene, the object may be something used by women in a domestic setting. There are several depictions of the weaver's work at home, but none feature an item matching the one on the Budapest *lekythos*. However, the decoration of side B of a red-figure *kylix* in Warsaw, attributed to the *Boot Painter* (Fig. 3), contains a very similar scene:<sup>11</sup> a seated woman holding a distaff in the centre, with a man leaning on a staff on each side. Both sides of the vase feature weaving women with men leaning on staffs between them, and the columns in the compositions may indicate the interior of the house. Thus, the object in the hand of the seated woman on the Budapest *lekythos* is perhaps also a distaff, and the thin painted line represents the thread tied to it. Another analogy, a red-figure *hydria* in London (Fig. 4), sheds more light on our scene:<sup>12</sup> while the composition is fundamentally different, it includes a seat-

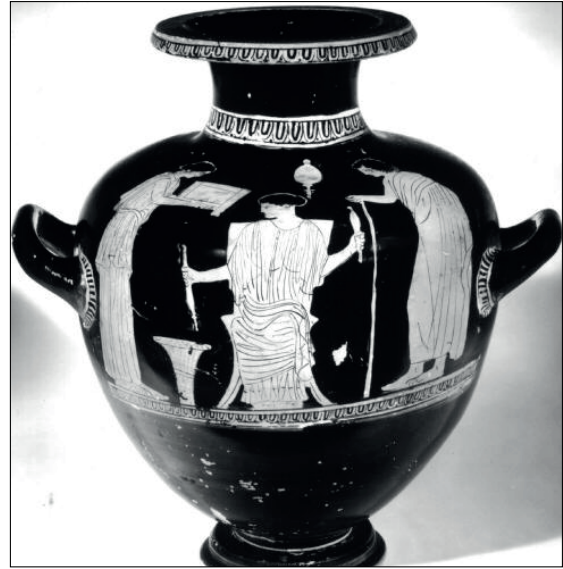


Fig. 4. Red-figure *hydria*. London, British Museum E193. WALTERS – FORSDYKE 1930, Pl. 82.3; BEAZLEY 1963, 1085.30; BAPD 214571 (©Trustees of the British Museum)



Fig. 5. Red-figure *pyxis* of the *Philadelphia 2449 Painter*. New York (NY), Metropolitan Museum 06.1117. <https://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/gr/original/DP-19655-001.jpg> (accessed on 29 November 2023); BEAZLEY 1963, 815.3; BAPD 210088

10 E.g., BAPD 1080; Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden ROIC10.

11 BAPD 210166; Warsaw, National Museum 142317; BEAZLEY 1963, 821.6.

12 BAPD 214571; London, British Museum E193; BEAZLEY 1963, 1085.30.

ed woman with a stick-like object—a distaff and a spindle—in each hand, and, importantly, a man leaning on a staff by her left side. Moreover, it is worth noting that the seated female figure on a red-figure *pyxis* with a weaving scene by the *Philadelphia 2449 Painter* in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 5) holds her hand similarly to the woman on the right side of the scene on the Budapest *lekythos*; however, the really poor quality and condition of the latter make drawing a direct iconographic parallel between the two vessels impossible.<sup>13</sup> Prostitutes in ancient Greece are thought to have been engaged in woolworking as a side job.<sup>14</sup> According to Marina Fischer, one of the simplest methods they used involved a distaff, a spindle, and a wool basket.<sup>15</sup> The spindle could be held by another woman; since the scene in focus does not contain anything resembling a basket, the two women are probably depicted working together.



Fig. 6. The findspots of the vases in Tab. 1 (©2023 Esri [EPSG: 3857])

In summary, the scene in focus depicts two women, of whom at least one is working with a distaff, and two standing men interacting with them. The same scene appears in the presented analogies<sup>16</sup> but due to the quality of their decoration and the images available, it cannot be decided if the women in these hold anything in their hands. The scheme, however, is the same: two seated women and two standing men leaning on sticks.

To better understand the situation, more analogies of the basic scene—with women and men mixed in a similar position—were sought in BAPD and the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*. The search yielded 23 vases (thirteen black- and ten red-figure ones), all from the turn of the Late Archaic and Early

13 BAPD 210088; New York (NY), Metropolitan Museum 06.1117; BEAZLEY 1963, 815.3.

14 FISCHER 2013, 219.

15 FISCHER 2013, 233.

16 E.g., BAPD 682, BAPD 21420, BAPD 331205.

Classical periods (Tab. 1). Although the numbers of figures in the scenes vary, they all include at least one man leaning on a staff and one sitting woman. The known findspots include, besides Greece, Etruria and Magna Graecia (Fig. 6). Previous interpretations of the related scenes vary in a broad range from conversation scenes (of mythological figures) to courting scenes. The key to the meaning of a scene often lies in the details and may be accessed by a contextual analysis of minor iconographic elements; several very similar compositions have been given a precise and distinct interpretation this way. Assigning a particular meaning to an individual occurrence of a complex scheme through smaller details is not unknown to Attic vase painting, as Geralda Jurriaans-Helle demonstrated excellently in connection with chariot scenes.<sup>17</sup> That considered, the Budapest *lekythos* seems to be an example of a graphic solution frequently appearing on late black-figure pottery: namely, the vase painter depicted only a basic scheme without details, thus leaving observers to interpret it as they wish—in our case, as a courtship scene, a domestic scene, or something else. Conclusively, while one can never assign identical meanings to similar scenes including a not clearly recognisable distaff, one must assume that the customers understood the reference.

One wonders if the Budapest *lekythos* displays a simplified version of a scene easily recognisable on better-quality red-figure vases. As painters in late archaic black-figure workshops are known to have tended to use only some core elements of otherwise elaborate schemes,<sup>18</sup> the Budapest *lekythos* may feature a variation of the scene appearing on the three presented analogies as ‘adapted’ to small black-figure vases.

The Budapest *lekythos* is adorned with a simplified representation of women—possibly *hetairai*—depicted during wool-working. This scheme also appears on more refined red-figure vases where the details leave no doubt of its meaning. Supposedly, the scenes of contemporary red-figure iconography served as an inspiration for lower-quality specimens with less realistic images like the subject of this study, where painters depicted only the most recognisable elements.

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17 JURRIAANS-HELLE 2021.

18 E.g., Group of Agora P 24327; Group of Agora P 24340; Group of Agora P 24377; Group of Agora P 24381; Group of Agora P 24402; Group of Agora P 24486.

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Tab. 1. List of vases with a 'seated woman/women and man/men leaning on staff(s)' scheme

No.	BAPD	Form	Attributed to	Provenance	Collection	Type	Iconography	Interpretation so far	Selected bibliography for identification
1	682	lekythos	Haimon Painter (manner of)		Gela, Museo Archeologico: N220	BF	Draped men with staffs and women seated on stool.	Just description	GIUDICE 1974, III.H. 9, Pl. 2397, No. 20.1-4.
2	21420	lekythos	Haimon Group		Prague, National Museum: 2184	BF	Draped men with staffs and women seated on stool.	Just description	BAŽANT ET AL. 1990, 66, Fig. 40, Pl. (091) 41.4-6.
3	303027	amphora (neck)	Würzburg 221 Group	Vulci (Italy)	London, British Museum: B275	BF	A: Chariot, old man with spears, draped youth seated on block with staff, nonsense inscriptions. B: Woman between columns between draped youths leaning on staffs. Under the handle: Eyes.	Leda and the Dioskuri	WALTERS 1929, III.H.e. 10, Pl. (213) 68.1A-D; BEAZLEY 1963, 401.4.
4	305595	oinochoe	Sevres 100 Painter (Workshop of Athena Painter)	Lecce (Italy)	Lecce, Museo Provinciale Sigismondo Castromediano: 562	BF	Woman seated on stool, between draped men, one leaning on staff	Just description	BEAZLEY 1956, 530.78, 534.7; BEAZLEY 1971, 264, 266; ROMANELLI 1979, III.H.e.3, Pl. (149) 2.1.3.
5	331205	lekythos	Emporion Painter (manner of)		Brussels, Musées Royaux: A2300	BF	Draped men or youths, one leaning on staff, women seated on stools.	Just description	MAYENCE – VEGHOOGEN 1937, III.H.e.13, Pl. (061) 21.30A-B; BEAZLEY 1956, 585.5.
6	331641	kylix	Haimon Painter (manner of)		Sèvres, Musée Ceramique: 244	BF	A,B: Women seated on stools and chairs with fillets, draped youths leaning on staffs, column. I: Satyr with drinking horn.	Domestic scene, possibly a meeting of youths	MASSOUL 1936, 35, Pl. (546) 17.7, 8, 12; BEAZLEY 1956, 562.545.
7	351650	oinochoe	Vatican G49 Painter (Workshop of Athena Painter)		Basel, market, München und Medaillen A.G.	BF	Woman seated on stool between draped men leaning on staffs, in the background: ivy.	Just description	BEAZLEY 1971, 265.267.
8	9033489	amphora (B type)	not attributed (dated: 525-475)		Berlin, Antikensammlung: F1828	BF	A: Herakles and Kerberos, Hermes. B: Woman seated on chair between draped men leaning on staffs.	Courting scene	MOMMSEN 2013, 43, 44, Beilage 4.1, Pls (4570, 4571) 14.3, 15.1-2.
9	351636	oinochoe	R.S. Class (Workshop of Athena Painter)		Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina: T800	BF	Draped men with staffs, women seated on blocks, in the background: ivy.	Just description	BEAZLEY 1971, 263.
10	13012	oinochoe	not attributed (dated: 525-475)	Civita Castellana (Italy)	Rome, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia: 18097	BF	Woman seated between men leaning on staffs.	Just description	GIUGLIOLI 1927, III. H. e. 27, Pl. (135) 51.4.
11	3509	oinochoe	Athena Painter (workshop of)	London, market, Sotheby's	London, market, Sotheby's	BF, WG	Woman seated, man leaning on staff, vine springs.	Just description	BORGERS – BRUJDER 2007, 72, 73, Fig. 44, Pls 588-589, No. 279.1-4, 280.2.

No.	BAPD	Form	Attributed to	Provenance	Collection	Type	Iconography	Interpretation so far	Selected bibliography for identification
12		lekythos	Haimon Group	Athens	Athens, Kerameikos Archaeological Museum, 276. 4.	BF, WG	Two pairs of a man leaning on a staff and one seated woman.	Just description	KUNZE-GÖTTE ET AL. 1999, 80. No. 276.4. Taf. 51.4/4.
13		lekythos	Haimon Group		Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts: 82.2.A	BF, WG	Woman seated between men leaning on staffs.	Domestic scene with weaving women	
14	7766	kylix	Makron		Toledo (OH), Museum of Art: 72.55	RF	A: Men reclining on staff and youth, both draped and with purses. Women, one in sakkos seated on chair, aryballos, sponge and strigil, pipescase, all suspended. B: Women, one with pipes, one in sakkos seated on chair holding fillet. Draped men leaning on staffs, mirror, aryballos, sponge and strigil suspended. I: Sacrifice, woman with oinochoe and sacrificial basket at altar, incense burner on block. Under the handle: palmette and stool.	Courting scene	BOULTER – LUCKNER 1976, 34, Fig. 21, Pls (833–834) 53.1–2, 54.1–2.
15	205714	hydria	Aegisthus Painter (manner of)	Cumae (Italy)	Brunswick (ME), Bowdoin College: 13.32	RF	Woman with wreath seated on chair between draped youths, one leaning on staff, kalathos.	Domestic scene	BEAZLEY 1963, 508.6; BEAZLEY 1971, 382.
16	210166	kylix	Boot Painter	Nola (Italy)	Warsaw, National Museum: 142317	RF	A: Draped youth with staff, women, one seated with kalathos, column. B: Draped youth and old man, both leaning on staffs. Women, one seated with distaff, one with skyphos, column. I: Draped youth seated with staff, woman with pomegranate, column. Under the handle: Chair.	Just description	BULAS 1931, 26, Pl. (037) 37.1A, 1B, 1C; BEAZLEY 1963, 821.6.
17	211222	kylix	Wedding Painter		Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum: 2150	RF	A: Woman seated between draped youths with staffs, one with alabastron. B: Woman between draped youths leaning on staffs. I: Woman seated, draped youth, bag suspended.	Courting scene	EICHLER 1951, 19–21, Pls (17, 21) 17.6, 21.1–3; BEAZLEY 1963, 1614.
18	212214	kylix	Sabouroff Painter		Rome, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia: 15708	RF	A,B: Women, some seated on chairs, some with wreaths, some with mirrors. Draped youths leaning on staffs. Bag and fillets suspended. I: One seated on chair with mirror. Cloth suspended, altar.	Domestic scene	BEAZLEY 1963, 839.35; BEAZLEY 1971, 423; GIGLIOLI 1926, III.1.c.16, Pls (74–75) 35.1.4, 36.1.

Same but different: A new possible scheme on late archaic black-figure vases

No.	BAPD	Form	Attributed to	Provenance	Collection	Type	Iconography	Interpretation so far	Selected bibliography for identification
19	212215	kylix	Sabouroff Painter		Paris, Musée du Louvre: G455	RF	A, B: Draped youths, with staffs, one with ball (?). Women, some seated on chairs, some with mirrors, some with balls (Fruit?). Stool, chair, fillets and cloth suspended. I: Woman with wreath (?) seated on chair, draped youth. Alabastron suspended.	Courting scene	BEAZLEY 1963, 936.1.
20	212600	kylix	Louvre C 11000 Painter	Orvieto (Italy)	Orvieto, Museo Civico: 195	RF	A: Draped youths, some with staffs, one seated on block in tent. (Achilles?) B: Draped youths, one seated on block, sword suspended. I: Woman with basket and draped man leaning on staff.	Conversation scenes	BECATTI 1940, III.I.c–III.I.d. 13, III.I.c–III.I.d. 14, Pl. (772) 15.3–5; BEAZLEY 1963, 839.36.
21	214566	hydria	Clio Painter	Greece	Brussels, Musées Royaux: A73	RF	Women, one seated with spindle (spinning), one with box, draped youth leaning on staff.	Domestic scene with spinning women	MAYENCE – VEGHOOGEN 1937, III.I.d. 5, Pl. (078) 9.3A.3B; BEAZLEY 1963, 1085.25.
22	214571	hydria	Kassel Painter	Nola (Italy)	London, British Museum: E 193	RF	Women, one seated with spindle and distaff, one with box, draped youth with staff, spindle suspended, kalathos.	Domestic scene with weaving women	WALTERS – FORSDYKE 1930, III.I.c. 15, Pl. (332) 82.3; BEAZLEY 1963, 1085.30.
23	214772	hydria	Hephaistos Painter		Havana, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: 155	RF	Women, one running with sash, one seated, draped youths with purses leaning on staffs, block and amphora (?).	Just description	BEAZLEY 1963, 1116.46.

